

Baltimore Sun

Friendly senators hear Turner, choice for CIA

Washington Bureau of The Sun

Washington—Adm. Stansfield Turner's confirmation as new head of central intelligence was preordained yesterday by the warm welcome and predictable questions he received from the Senate Intelligence Committee.

The confirmation vote is scheduled for today, but no real opposition emerged to the Navy veteran's appointment to what Senator Barry M. Goldwater (R., Ariz.) called "a tough assignment, perhaps the hardest of all the jobs in government."

The confirmation hearing was dominated by committee members' obvious anxiety to elicit the candidate's undertakings to avoid repetition of past abuses and to give Congress a freer flow of information to permit it to have a more effective overview of intelligence operations.

The thrust of the few critical questions aimed at Admiral Turner was in two directions: the wisdom of having a military officer as head of the Central Intelligence Agency, and the ability of Admiral Turner to stand up to President Carter in a moral, legal or constitutional confrontation.

Admiral Turner rejected the idea that he should resign from active service, noting that 11 past directors or deputy directors of the CIA had been military officers, 7 of these eventually returning to uniform.

He argued that he would give his total allegiance to Mr. Carter, and that any secondary loyalty to the Navy or Defense Department would become quickly obvious and undermine his usefulness to the President.

Asked what action he would take in a serious confrontation over what he considered an illegal or improper action by the

President, Admiral Turner said he would first make his own position forcefully known, and then resign. Finally he would report the conditions of his resignation to the Senate committee.

Generally, Admiral Turner's testimony and answers emphasized the positive: his determination to improve the quality of intelligence-gathering while keeping it strictly within the law; his willingness to keep Congress as fully informed of overt and covert operations as executive prerogatives and the safety of individual agents permit; the need to improve morale in the scandal-rocked intelligence community, and the advisability of preventing unauthorized leaks while reducing over-classification of intelligence material.

Senator Charles McC. Mathias, Jr. (R., Md.) took issue with Admiral Turner's suggestion that there could be certain details that Congress "might not want to hear."

"That phrase 'might not want to hear' is a little bit of a sore phrase around here . . . We have some constitutional responsibility to know, to share the burden. . . I don't think this should be a criterion for withholding information that this country might not want to know," said Mr. Mathias, drawing an explanation from Admiral Turner that he was referring to his responsibility to protect the lives of agents, presumably by withholding their identities.

Carter said to cut access to data on CIA activities

Washington (AP)—President Carter has sharply reduced access within the executive branch to information about Central Intelligence Agency operations. Senator Alan Cranston said yesterday.

The California Democrat said the matter of leaks of information about CIA operations was a major topic of discussion at a breakfast meeting between the President and congressional leaders of both parties.

Mr. Carter told the congressional leaders that he had cut the number of persons with access to such information from 40 to 5.

Mr. Cranston said the President also repeatedly referred to the fact that seven congressional committees also receive information about CIA activities.

Mr. Cranston, assistant majority leader of the Senate, said Mr. Carter stopped short of asking that fewer committees receive CIA data.